

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
Air Traffic Organization Policy

N JO 7110.648

Effective Date:
January 8, 2014

Cancellation Date:
July 24, 2014

SUBJ: Separation (SVFR)

- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice amends FAA Order JO 7110.65, Paragraph 7-5-3, Separation by delineating separation standards that must be applied during Special VFR (SVFR) operations.
- 2. Audience.** This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: Air Traffic Services; Mission Support, and System Operations; and all associated air traffic control facilities.
- 3. Where Can I Find This Notice?** This notice is available on the MyFAA employee Web site at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/ and on the air traffic publications Web site at http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications.
- 4. Procedures:** Amend FAA Order JO 7110.65, paragraph 7-5-3 to read as follows:

7-5-3. SEPARATION

- a. Apply non-radar, altitude, or visual separation between:

1. SVFR aircraft
2. SVFR and IFR aircraft

NOTE-

Due to the requirement for fixed-wing aircraft to maintain 1-mile flight visibility and all SVFR aircraft to remain clear of clouds, radar separation is not authorized during SVFR operations. Radar vectors are authorized, as prescribed in para 5-6-1, Application, subparagraph f, to expedite the entrance, exit, and transition of SVFR aircraft through the appropriate surface area.

REFERENCE-

FAA Order JO 7110.65, Chapter 6, Nonradar

FAA Order JO 7110.65, 7-2-1, Visual Separation

FAA Order JO 7110.65, 7-5-4, Altitude Assignment

b. Alternate SVFR helicopter separation minima may be established when warranted by the volume and/or complexity of local helicopter operations. Alternate SVFR helicopter separation minima must be contained in an LOA with the helicopter operator which must specify, as a minimum, that the SVFR helicopters are to maintain visual reference to the surface and adhere to the following aircraft separation minima:

b1 through b1(b), no change

2. 1 mile between SVFR helicopters. This separation may be reduced to 200 feet if both helicopters are departing simultaneously on courses that diverge by at least 30 degrees and:

(a) The tower can determine this separation by reference to surface markings; or

(b) One of the departing helicopters is instructed to remain at least 200 feet from the other.

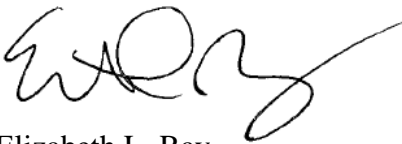
3. When applying the provisions of Alternate SVFR helicopter separation minima, towers that are delegated separation responsibility in accordance with FAA Order JO 7210.3, paragraph 10-5-3, Functional Use of Certified Tower Radar Displays, subparagraph b5, or delegated airspace in accordance with Order 7210.3, paragraph 10-5-3, subparagraph d, may use CTRDs to ensure that the prescribed separation exists. Radar Vectors are authorized as prescribed in FAA Order JO 7110.65, paragraph 5-6-1, Application.

4. Towers that are not delegated airspace or separation responsibility must use CTRDs in accordance with Order 7110.65, paragraph 3-1-9, Use of Tower Radar Displays, subparagraph b.

5. Distribution. This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support, and System Operations; the Office of ATO Safety and Technical Training; the Flight Standards Service; the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

6. Background. Terminal Procedures, in conjunction with the Air Traffic Control (ATC) Handbook Revision Steering Committee, solicited and received responses from field facilities/Service Areas that indicated a need for clarification regarding the application of radar separation to Special Visual Flight Rules (SVFR) fixed-wing aircraft. After reviewing these responses, it was determined that FAA Order JO 7110.65, paragraph 7-5-3, Separation, was indeed being applied throughout the NAS in an inconsistent manner. A Document Change Proposal (DCP) was required to eliminate ambiguity in the language as well as the need for future interpretations.

In June 2013, the ATC Handbook Revision Steering Committee, co-chaired by FAA management and NATCA, conducted a Safety Risk Management (SRM) panel to review a DCP, for paragraph 7-5-3, containing changes delineating SVFR operational procedures. The SRM panel reviewed ATSAP data collected from March 2008 through June 2013 concerning the understanding of SVFR separation and service requirements. A search for ATSAP data produced 52 applicable reports of which 67% indicated confusion regarding this paragraph. This data supported the finding that facilities have been using the guidance in Order JO 7110.65, paragraph 5-6-1f, Application, as justification for radar vectoring SVFR aircraft to achieve radar separation with other SVFR aircraft and IFR aircraft. This is an incorrect application of existing guidance.



Elizabeth L. Ray
Vice President, Mission Support Services
Air Traffic Organization

11/25/13
Date Signed